

RUGBY
CLASS I SCENIC – RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Morgan County

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Rugby

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Cumberland Plateau

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

ACREAGE: 323

YEAR DESIGNATED: 2006

DESCRIPTION: Rugby is a 323 acre state natural area located southwest of the town of Historic Rugby in Morgan County on the Cumberland Plateau. Little Creek drains through the property and drops into White Oak Creek, which empties into the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. The gorge topography here is much broader and flatter than typical gorges on the plateau and is much more like a large hollow lacking the steep cliffs and rockhouses commonly associated with the plateau.

The forest includes tulip poplar, red maple, and sourwood with northern red oak, white oak, and hickories scattered throughout. White pine and Virginia pine can also be observed, although the pines have been severely affected by southern pine beetle infestation. American beech is present on both north and south facing lower slopes. The forest along Little Creek is comprised of tulip poplar, American beech, red maple, magnolia species, and an occasional red oak. The understory consists of hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and saplings of beech, tulip poplar and red maple. The shrub layer has spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), blueberries (*Vaccinium stamineum*), mountain camellia (*Stewartia ovata*), sweet azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*), and seedling/saplings of the overstory species. The creek area is significantly impacted by the invasive exotic species Japanese spiraea (*Spiraea japonica*). Past logging activity is evident throughout much of the area.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Historic Rugby, Inc; P.O. Box 8, State Scenic Hwy 52, Rugby, TN 37733, phone (423) 628-2441 or toll free (800) 214-3400; Division of Natural Areas, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431; Division of Natural Areas – East TN office, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921, (865) 594-5601.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Though trails and parking are not yet developed, public access is possible via old roads that enter the natural area. Visitors should stop at the Historic Rugby Visitor Centre for information and specific directions.

DIRECTIONS: From Knoxville take Interstate 75 north to exit 141 at Highway 63. Proceed west on Highway 63 approximately 20 miles (through Huntsville) to its terminus at Highway 27. Turn left (south) on Highway 27 for eight miles to Elgin. At Elgin, turn right (west) onto Highway 52, and proceed for seven miles to Rugby. An alternative and scenic route is through Oak Ridge, Oliver Springs, Wartburg, Sunbright to Elgin - turn left on Hwy. 52 and proceed as above. See also <http://www.historicrugby.org/location.htm> for directions from Nashville, TN and Lexington, KY.